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NEWS

From concerts to climate: $348K in donations power Winchester's spring agenda

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

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Winchester Select Board members took up an agenda full of donations, promotions and projects. FILE PHOTO

In a unanimous series of votes, the Winchester Select Board accepted donations totaling more than $348,000. Among these were notable contributions including $2,250 from Pediatric Dental Associates,

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Winchester Rotary Club, and Winchester Savings Bank to support Concerts on the Common.

Town Manager Beth Rudolph expressed appreciation, calling the concerts "a beloved Winchester tradition that brings the community together each summer."

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) provided two significant grants: $100,000 towards the purchase of a trommel screen at the town's transfer station and $195,000 for an aerobic digester.

Rudolph explained these additions would enhance the town's ability to process yard waste and organic materials, reflecting Winchester's ongoing commitment to sustainability.

The board also acknowledged community-driven generosity, accepting $902 donated by individuals and families to the Recreation Department's Neighbors Helping Neighbors fund and $370 to support the Council on Aging's programs and transportation services.

Additionally, the Department of Conservation and Recreation earmarked $50,000 to install safety netting at McDonald Field's playground and a shaded seating area at Leonard Field, enhancing safety and comfort for families.

Appointments and promotions

Fire Department promotions saw Nicholas Hinckley, Robert Joyce, and Andrew Moran rise from firefighter to lieutenant.

The board waived the customary 15-day waiting period for their promotions, underscoring immediate staffing needs.

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Brian DeMuth was similarly appointed as a Department of Public Works custodian.

Infrastructure projects move forward

Infrastructure developments remain prominent in Winchester's priorities.

Rudolph detailed upcoming construction, including sidewalk replacements near the Quill Rotary starting April 7, part of the Winchester Center Train Station project. She cautioned residents about pedestrian detours and the presence of police details during the month-long construction period.

The town website is undergoing a significant redesign in collaboration with CivicPlus, incorporating community feedback to improve communication and accessibility. The revamped website is expected to launch by early fall.

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Additional improvements discussed include Winchester High School's gym and concrete floor repairs, scheduled for completion this spring.

Rudolph also highlighted ongoing safety enhancements with the upcoming installation of rapid flashing beacons at several pedestrian crossings, prioritizing student safety around Main Street and Mystic School.

Eversource project approved

A public hearing swiftly approved an Eversource petition to install 10 feet of conduit at 407 Highland Ave., ensuring upgraded electric serv
Winchester Community Music School.

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Executive Director Laurie Russell attended, noting the project as crucial to the school's operational continuity.

Select Board reorganization

In board administrative news, Michelle Prior was unanimously re-elected chair, with Anthea Brady taking the role of vice chair. Prior thanked Brady for "stepping up," emphasizing the teamwork central to the board's effectiveness.

Decorative lighting for parks

The Winchester Chamber of Commerce gained approval to enhance Bellino and Eliot parks with decorative lighting, funded by Lights of Love.

The lights, intended to be illuminated from dusk until 11 p.m., aim to unify the upper Main Street area with downtown Winchester.

Chamber President Julie Fish described the initiative as "an opportunity to warmly connect both ends of Main Street."

Energy initiatives highlighted

Energy initiatives also took center stage, with the Energy Management Committee presenting its ongoing efforts, including a $125,000 Green Communities grant application for McCall School's HVAC system improvements.

Committee members underscored past successes and current challenges, notably fluctuating revenues from energy surcharges, calling attention to the town's proactive stance on energy efficiency.

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Pickleball courts fundraising effort

The board discussed proposals from Friends of Winchester Recreation to raise funds for new pickleball courts at Ginn Field.

Recreation Director Nick Cacciolfi outlined preliminary steps, including conducting a sound study and community meetings, essential to addressing neighbors' concerns over noise.

Outdoor dining plans reviewed

Outdoor dining applications from five local restaurants were reviewed, with the board ensuring seating arrangements and operating hours aligned with safety and community standards.

Notably, First House Pub and Lucia's retained their prior configurations, reflecting popular support for Winchester's vibrant outdoor dining scene.

Consent agenda items passed

Consent agenda approvals included several one-day liquor licenses for upcoming local events and endorsement of the Winchester Cultural District and Griffin Museum's Summer Photo Festival, scheduled from June 13 to Sept. 19.

Upcoming agenda preview

Looking forward, upcoming agenda items include preparations for the Spring Town Meeting, addressing a youth baseball batting cage proposal, assessing opioid fund needs, and developing a municipal decarbonization roadmap — critical elements shaping Winchester's immediate future.

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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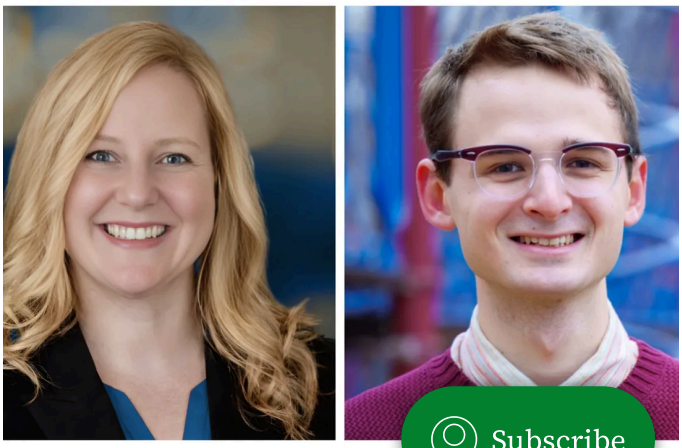

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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